

SEP 05 2001

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12 MS. CHOWNING: Vonne, V-O-N-N-E, Chowning,  
13 C-H-O-W-N-I-N-G.

14 I don't have any prepared speech or anything.  
15 I am an elected official, a State representative an  
16 Assemblywoman of the state of Nevada. I represent  
17 district 28, which is part of Las Vegas and part of  
18 North Las Vegas.

19 I've been a state representative for 12  
20 years. During those 12 years, I've had several  
21 opportunities to send surveys and questionnaires  
22 through the mail and talk face to face with thousands  
23 and thousands of Nevadans, my constituents, whom I'm  
24 very proud to represent.

25 I would say out of the entire 12 years of all

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1 the surveys, I've never had one person who has voiced  
2 their support for the nuclear waste for the Yucca  
3 Mountain repository. Overwhelmingly, their voices say  
4 no. And that's why I'm here tonight. I proudly bring  
5 their voices as they cannot come here personally. I  
6 represent people who primarily are service workers in  
7 the hotels and they are working. They're washing  
8 dishes. They're cleaning rooms. They're dealing  
9 cards. They're cleaning the floors. Or they are  
10 people who are trying to get their babies to sleep.  
11 They cannot be here tonight.

12 I am appalled at the manner in which this  
13 so-called public hearing is being held because the

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14 people that I represent cannot come to a facility such  
15 as this. I personally had a very difficult time coming  
16 here and it is not accessible nor personable to the  
17 public. And yet, the message that is being sent is:  
18 Trust us; we are your friends; we are doing what is  
19 best for you. And even this is the true voice of what  
20 they are doing to us and that is shutting us out,  
21 making us feel as uncomfortable as possible, and trying  
22 to hide what they are doing to us.

23 I also am the daughter of a person who worked  
24 at the Nevada test site for many, many years and I feel  
25 that the exposure to radiation shortened his life. He

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1 was told to trust the people who were his employers.  
2 All of his associates with whom he worked have died.  
3 Most of them died a very excruciating death and it was  
4 because of the exposure to radiation. That is another  
5 reason why I am opposed to the nuclear waste being  
6 buried in my state, because it's been shown that we  
7 cannot trust these people.

8 I also am the chairwoman of the State  
9 Assembly Transportation Committee. As such, I've had  
10 lots of research that has been presented to me and what  
11 I have been told is that the means of transportation  
12 will be mainly via railroad and the trucks that will  
13 come off the rail car will be more than 200 feet long,  
14 approximately 14 to 20 feet wide. They will be in  
15 Caliente, Apex, or Jean. When those trucks come off  
16 the rail, the only defense that our state has is to

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17 have Nevada Highway Patrol officers escort these trucks  
18 to keep the trucks from the general populous. You can  
19 imagine how horrifying it would be for a private  
20 citizen who is traveling on the road to encounter a  
21 massive vehicle such as this.

22 And we've also been told that the low-level  
23 nuclear waste that is being transported now in our  
24 state never goes over the Boulder Dam, never goes  
25 through the Spaghetti Bowl, never goes through the  
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1 cities. Again, we are told to trust the Department of  
2 Energy. However, last year at least eight shipments  
3 did go through the Spaghetti Bowl, did go over the  
4 Boulder Dam, and yet they were not supposed to. How  
5 did that happen? The Department of Energy apologized  
6 for that. They didn't know how it happened. It wasn't  
7 supposed to. I am told that the drivers prefer to go  
8 through the Spaghetti Bowl because it's a shortcut.

9 Now, that's low-level waste that is plenty  
10 hazardous, very, very dangerous to our populous. And  
11 the mother who is taking her kids to school, the man  
12 who is going to work or the woman who is going to work,  
13 is traveling along the road never knowing that  
14 low-level nuclear waste is traveling right next to  
15 them. But remember -- that wasn't supposed to happen.  
16 It's for this and many reasons that I am highly opposed  
17 to this nuclear waste being forced down our throats.

18 I came here originally as a young girl in  
19 August of 1950. I've been proud to call Nevada my

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20 home. I've been proud to raise my children and now my  
21 grandchildren here. And I never, ever expected that  
22 something as drastic as this would be shoved down my  
23 throat. I'm here as a person, as a Nevadan, as a proud  
24 representative of approximately 40,000 Nevadans to  
25 voice my strong opposition to the nuclear waste coming

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1 to our state and also to the manner in which this  
2 so-called public hearing is being put forth. Thank  
3 you.

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